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Charity covers a multitude of sins

click
click
REALLY OKAY, YANAGI...?
IS THIS...
THIS IS...
beep beep
THE ONLY WAY LEFT.
FUU...
NO...
FUU...

I CAN'T LET ANYONE...
CRY BE-CAUSE OF UTSUHO ANYMORE...
JUST THINKING LIKE THIS IS MORE THAN ENOUGH...
JUST ME ALONE ...!!

HE'S SO BADLY INJURED ..
IT'S GONNA BLOW SOON!
IF WE LET HIM GO BY HIMSELF ...!
DOES HE REALLY PLAN TO RUN ALL THE WAY UP THERE BY HIMSELF!?
I KNOW THAT! BUT WE CAN'T DO ANY-THING....
!!?
DAMN IT..!
THAT BASTARD ATSUMA ...!

FORCED DRAINAGE WILL BEGIN FROM THE CENTER AREA
600 SECOND STILL DETONATION OF LOWER AREA
..TCH. WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW..!?
THE DOOR LEADING TO THE EXIT IS CLOSING ...!
THEY PLAN TO USE WATER TO FLOOD THIS PLACE!?
DAMMIT! THEY JUST HAD TO PICK RIGHT NOW ...!
GO...!!

Aika ...!?
Leave this place to me..!
You chase after him, quick...!
But you...!
I'LL TAKE THIS GIRL AND HEAD DOWN THE SEWER.
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE THE LABRATORY THAT WAY.
IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO THEM, SUMIRE-SAMA WOULD BE VERY SAD.
THAT'S WHY YOU GUYS MUST RETURN SAFELY...!
FRANKLY, TO BE APART FROM YOU AGAIN...
I FEEL SLIGHTLY... SAD... HOWEVER--

MY WORDS!
THOSE ARE...
NO MATTER IF IT'S TALKING ABOUT THE PAST OR BECOMING THAT PERSON'S STRENGTH, I CAN'T DO IT.
NO! FOR MYSELF AS I AM NOW,
HOW CAN YOU KEEP GOING LIKE THAT!
SO, I SEARCHED ALL MY LIFE...
clang
SO THAT...I CAN BECOME SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HATE 'ME'.

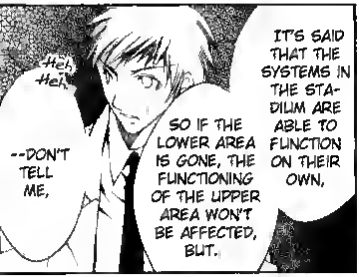
"YOU SURE ARE TROUBLESOME!"
GO!
"SHUU!"
YOU...
I'M FINE... ON MY OWN!
"--NO PROBLEM!"
REALLY HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT!
Approach

PLEASE BE SAFE!
...I WILL!

I WILL...
WAIT FOR YOU OUTSIDE ...!
Shui...!

--ACTUALY... I WANT TO CALL OUT YOUR NAME AGAIN-
THERE ARE STILL A WHOLE LOT MORE...
THINGS I WANT TO TELL YOU ...
--BUT FOR NOW,
THIS IS ENOUGH...
I JUST HOPE THAT SUMIRE-SAMA WILL FIND HAPPINESS,
AND I PRAY FOR THE SAFETY OF YOU ALL.
AND MY WISH...

--480 SECONDS ARE LEFT BEFORE THE LOWER AREA EXPLODES,
ALL SYSTEMS ARE FUNCTIONING NORMALLY.
...BUT, IS THIS REALLY OKAY?
PROFESSOR HASUMI.


IT'S SAID THAT THE SYSTEMS IN THE STADIUM ARE ABLE TO FUNCTION ON THEIR OWN,
SO IF THE LOWER AREA IS GONE, THE FUNCTIONING OF THE UPPER AREA WON'T BE AFFECTED, BUT.
--DON'T TELL ME,
Heh, Heh.

IS ENTRUSTED WITH THE SAFETY OF YOU ALL---

NO MATTER WHAT'S LEFT, IT DOESN'T HOLD ANY MEANING AT ALL.
AFTER ALL,
NO...! I DIDN'T MEAN THAT!
YOU INTEND TO JUST LET THE INTRUDERS DO WHATEVER THEY WANT?
IN THE END--
Should we send a guard to confirm?
An emergency elevator at the upper area was activated!
Professor Hasumi!
IF THERE'S NO MEANING IN STAYING HERE
PROFESSOR...?
--NO, JUST LET THEM BE!

AS EXPECTED,
fuu...
fuu...
THEN, AT LEAST...
EVERY ROUTE IS A DEAD END!
---SO,
fuu...
THERE'S ONLY THIS WAY LEFT...
haa...
IT'S NOT BAD TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN

HOW COULD I JUST LEAVE LIKE THAT?
WITH YOU HERE...
!!
GEEZ, WHAT A JOKE!
FIRE ...!?
THEY LEFT BY ANOTHER ROUTE ...
Where're Anzu and the others?
You...!
Why did you come after us?
HUH...?
... LEAVE ...
BECAUSE SHE---
EVEN THOUGH I SAID THAT, I'M AFRAID I CAN'T BE SURE OF IT

...ATSUMA ...?
SO HEARTLESS! AND I PURPOSELY CAME TO FIND YOU...
What are you doing!? Why didn't you leave!
Run away, quick! I'm begging you!
It's my own problem now!
THIS ISN'T WHERE YOU SHOULD BE!
AND AIKA NEEDS YOU,
ANZU... IS WOUNDED,
I CAN'T LEAVE KOJOMARU ...
--PLUS, I STILL HAVEN'T KEPT MY PROMISE TO THOSE PEOPLE..!
No! Because...!
IF YOU THINK SO, THEN WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE WITH US...

I DIDN'T COME HERE ALONE;
THOSE PEOPLE ...?
"THE ODDS OF WINNING ARE IN MY FAVOR,"
"I WILL PUT AN END TO ALL OF THIS"...
I DON'T WANT TO TURN THE WORDS I SPOKE TO THEM,

INTO "LIES" ...!!

...I STILL HAVE THINGS I NEED TO DO,
YOU JUST HAVE TO...
TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN...

sfx: Enter with force
THEN...
Hey, you...!
180 SECONDS TO DETONATION OF THE LOWER AREA
LET ME HELP YOU!
Crash
--I UNDERSTAND..
You still don't understand!?
You guys...
JUST BREAK THROUGH THIS DOOR, RIGHT?
HEAR THAT? THERE'S NO MORE TIME TO LISTEN TO YOUR NONSENSE!
AND TO MAKE YOU RETURN SAFELY!
THAT IS, NOT LET YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE,
Shut up.
I ALSO WANT TO KEEP MY PROMISE WITH AIKA.

So stob-born ...!
look who's talking!
Ready...
GO ...!!!

No...!
That door!
You can't de-strog...
YOU ARE...
step...

--YOU CAN'T DESTROY THAT DOOR
THE DAMAGE ALARMS IN THE LOWER AREA...
ARE ALL CONNECTED TO THE WIRE THAT WILL CAUSE THE DETONATION,
YANAGI...!

THANKS FOR YOUR ADVICE
BUT, WHY...
AS A MEMBER OF THE LABORATORY, WHY ARE YOU TELLING US THIS?
stop!
IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU GUYS WANT TO ENTER BY FORCE,
YOU WILL CERTAINLY BE INVOLVED IN THE EXPLOSION.

OR MAYBE, YOU WANT TO...
TAKE CARE OF US INTRUDERS MORE PERSONALLY?
Snicker...
Poof
THE EMER-GENCY ELEVATOR ?
ALL THE DOORS AND MOBILE FACILITIES LEADING TO THE LOWER AREA ARE LOCKED BY THE CONTROL ROOM
AND THERE'S NO WAY TO SHUT OFF THE DETONATION PROGRAM.
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY LEFT TO GET INTO THE WIRING AND ACTIVATE IT.
BUT THE ACTIVATION TIME IS LIMITED, SO YOU CAN'T REALLY REACH ALL THE WAY.

BUT, THIS WAY, YOU CAN GET CLOSER TO THE UPPER AREA.
!?
YOU...
--BEFORE THIS, I ALWAYS THOUGHT THE LABORATORY WAS WHERE I BELONGED,
THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED, I WOULD NEVER DO THIS.
BUT...
THE REASON FOR MY BEING HAS DISAPPEARED ...
ATSUMA ...

A "HOLLOW" WORLD WITHOUT ANY DOUBT OR REDEMP-TION—
REFLECTED IN THAT PERSON'S EYES...
IS A LIMITLESS DARKNESS ...
IF YOU TOUCHED IT, IT WOULD BRING YOU NOTHING BUT PAIN...
THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANYONE WHO COULD STOP IT—
THAT PERSON LIVES IN SUCH A WORLD.
DO YOU STILL WANT TO GO—?
...EVEN SO,

FOR THAT PERSON,
IT CAN'T BE ANYONE BUT ME.
step
—I WANT TO GO...

IS THAT SO?
!?
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?
HURRY UP...
THE WEIGHT CAPACITY OF THAT ELEVATOR IS 150 KG,
ONLY 2 PEOPLE CAN TAKE IT.

IF IT'S YOU, PERHAPS YOU CAN SAVE HIM FROM THAT "HOLLOW" WORLD.
You guys...!?
IT'S GREAT TO HEAR YOU SAY THOSE WORDS.
hurry up
You guys....!?
THAT PERSON'S WORLD IS FAR TOO INTENSE FOR ME,
...BUT, YOU'RE DIFFER-ENT,
I DON'T HAVE ANY UNSETTLED FEELINGS TO-WARDS THIS LABORATORY ANYMORE,
BUT I HAVE JUST ONE LAST REQUEST FOR YOU,
IS IT OKAY, ATSUMA ...?

PLEASE ...
MY... WISH THAT I CAN'T ACCOMPLISH...
10 SECONDS TO DETONATION ...
9
8
7
THAT PERSON. ..
I'LL LEAVE HIM TO YOU--
Bâoum!...

--WITH THIS..
"MY" MISSION IS OVER.
hmp-
CONSIDER-ING MY PREVIOUS ACTIONS,
THIS METHOD OF REDEMPTION SEEMS TOO LITTLE.
...ARE YOU CRAZY?
CRAZY TO DO SUCH SELFISH THINGS
...I MIGHT BE CRAZY, BUT...
IF YOU DON'T LET GO AND DO CRAZY THINGS, YOU'D NEVER KNOW THE OUTCOME OF THEM, WOULD YOU?

BOTH OF US, TO-GETHER...
pat
FROM TODAY ON, WE CAN GO WHER-EVER WE WANT,
--NO...
NO...
ATSUMA ...?

Take cover against the wall!!
IF...
WE HAVE TO "SACRIFICE" SOMEONE IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD...
1
2
OR "PATH" IT IS ...
NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF "POWER"...
3
At...!
4
"THIS ISN'T RIGHT" ...!!

Bang!
Why ...!?
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND UTSUHO-!?
Ding..

I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE ASKING WHY...!
YOU MADE YOUR CHOICE, DIDN'T YOU...
LIKE ME, YOU CHOSE A PATH DIFFERENT THAN UTSUHO!
YOU SAID IT...
YOUR PLACE ISN'T HERE...
AND YOU DON'T BELONG TO THAT WORLD ANYMORE?
ONLY YOU CAN SEE IT...
YOUR TOMOR-ROW...!
TOMOR-ROW...

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DEFEAT UTSUHO,
I...
PACH
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I WILL NEVER WALK THE SAME PATH AS THAT GUY...!
PACH
ATSUMA
...
SO, I DIDN'T HEAR YOUR "TESTAMENT"...
YOU
TOMORROW

INSTEAD OF LEAVING EVERYTHING TO OTHERS AND DISAP-PEARING,
WHY NOT SEE IT HROUGH TO THE END YOUR-SELF...!!

WHAT HAP-PENED?
AFTER NOA...
EVEN THE LABORA-TORY...
---HEY!
THIS ISN'T GOOD! IT'S...
---EVERYONE'S HOPES,
WILL NOT BE WASTED---

---I WILL DEFINITELY ...
--ALL OF THEM...
...I WILL BRING THEM...
AND MOVE FOR-WARD...
REACH UTSUHO_ !!

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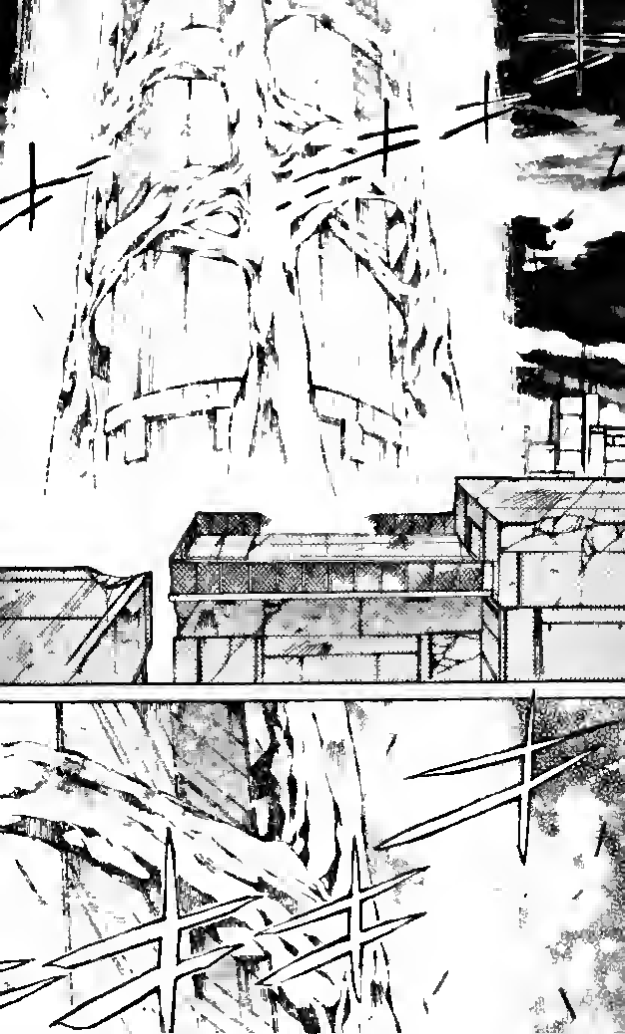
CHAPTER 44



--AT-
SUMA!
HEY! PULL YOURSELF TOGETH-ER!
ATSUMA ...!

YANAGI ..!
WHAT THE HELL HAP-PENED !?
WHY DID ATSUMA GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO PRO-TECT YOU GUYS...
SHUI,
MAY I ASK YOU A QUES-TION?
JUST HOW LONG DO YOU INTEND TO...
STAY BY HIS SIDE?
...WHAT?
I FINALLY UNDER-STAND...
IT SEEMS ...

.. BUT IF WE JUST LET HIM TO DO WHAT HE WANTS...
IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE SELFISH FOR ME TO SAY THIS, SINCE I WANTED TO SEND YOU GUYS UP THERE,
. TRUE PERSON-ALITY?
HIS... TRUE PERSONALITY ...
HE WILL CERTAINLY ...
LOSE HIS LIFE.

JUST LOOK AT HIS BODY...
THE WOUND I GAVE HIM HASN'T COMPLETELY HEALED YET.
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE THINGS WE'VE DONE TO HIM,
HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY REASON TO RETURN.
WHAT HE WANTED TO PROTECT WASN'T "US"
STANDS
IT WAS THAT WHICH WILL BOND HIM TO THAT PERSON THROUGH HIS STRUGGLE...
"HIMSELF"!
FOR HIM, ONLY BY "OPPOSING" THAT PERSON.
WILL HE PREVENT HIMSELF FROM WALKING THE SAME PATH;
THAT'S WHY HE IGNORES HIS BODY'S LIMITS,
AND WILL PROTECT OTHERS EVEN TO THE POINT OF BEING INVOLVED IN THE EXPLOSION

HOW LONG DO YOU INTEND TO STAY BY HIS SIDE?
YET YOU...
IF YOU STAY BY HIS SIDE,
HIS THOUGHTS ARE NAIVE, AND THUS DANGEROUS;
WON'T YOU STAND BETWEEN HIM AND HIS "DREAM"?
...WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS, TO KEEP ATSUMA FROM LOSING HIS LIFE,
IT'S BETTER FOR ME TO LEAVE HIM...?
... PRECISELY

TCH!
STOP SPOUTING SUCH NONSENSE ...
HAVE THE COURAGE TO LET HIM SAVE US A SECOND TIME.
PLUS, I DON'T...
HE DOESN'T THINK WE HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH UTSUHO ANYMORE,
CAN'T I?
THAT'S WHY YOU JUST STAND BACK AND WATCH FROM AFAR, FOR ATSUMI'S SAKE?
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO NEXT...
SHUI

THERE'S NO MORE ROOM FOR US TO INTERFERE --
COME TO THINK OF IT, BETWEEN THEM...
STEP
STEP
...I KNOW THAT,

...
BUT
...
CLICK
CLICK
WHAT CAN I DO EXCEPT THIS...!

PEEK
!
STARE
AH-- THAT'S GREAT,
YOU FINALLY WOKE UP
HOW ARE YOU FEELING? THE GIRL HASN'T WOKEN UP YET ...
WHERE AM I...?
DON'T STAND UP, YOU'RE HEAVILY WOUNDED ...
JUMP
AWAY

DON'T WORRY,
THAT GIRL...
!
SHE HASN'T WOKEN YET,
BUT SHE'S OK, SOMEHOW
-- BUT,
DAR
DAR
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?
FIRST, NOA DISSAP-PEARED, THEN THE LABORATORY EXPLODED ...
EVEN...
AND THAT BEAM OF LIGHT...

AFTER YOU TWO EMERGED, THE LIGHT SUDDENLY APPEARED,
ENGULFING THE WHOLE LABORA-TORY ...
LIKE SOMETHING INVISIBLE WAS AP-PROACHING IT...
--WHY ...
DID YOU SAVE ME...?
NOT JUST ME,
THE NOA THAT WERE FLUSHED OUT ARE BEING SAVED BY THE PEOPLE IN THE STREET
WELL...
WE CAN'T SAY OUR MOTIVES ARE PURE
WE DID THESE THINGS,
BE-CAUSE WE STILL NEED YOU.

JUST BY LOOKING AT YOU, I CAN SENSE THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG ...
...I..
THIS SITUATION IS JUST LIKE LAST TIME, WITH THE EARTH-QUAKE;
...I KNOW
IF IT'S THE NOA, PERHAPS SOMETHING CAN STILL BE DONE
BUT EVEN IT'S COME TO THIS..
THE EXISTENCE OF YOU NOA IS STILL EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

HOWEVER... WE STILL WANT TO SELFISHLY DEPEND ON YOU ALL—
YOU MUST HAVE A TERRIBLY LOW OPINION OF US
IT'S NOT FOR ME TO MAKE THOSE KIND OF JUDGE-MENTS.
BECAUSE OF YOUR GUIDANCE,
I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LIVE FOR THIS CHILD UNTIL NOW.
BEING GUIDED---
I, TOO, AM...
WE ARE THE SAME...
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S YOU OR US,

IF WE DON'T DO THAT
WE THINK OF SOME-ONE,
DEPEND ON SOME-ONE,
WE MIGHT BE UNABLE TO CONTINUE LIVING...
PRAY TO LIVE FOR A CERTAIN PERSON
THAT'S WHY
I KEEP FEELING REST-LESS...
-- THAT'S RIGHT ...
PERHAPS THAT'S IT--

WHY AM I SO USE- LESS?
...WHO'S THERE...
CLANK
CLANK
I HEAR VOICES ...

-LIT..
CLICK
ATSUMA, YOU'RE AWAKE ...?
?
WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S WITH THAT EXPRESSION ...
WHERE... AM I...?
THE CENTER OF THE TOWER,
PROBABLY THE NIGHT SHIFT CONTROL ROOM.
Although it looks like it's been abandoned for some time

WHY ARE WE HERE..
UGH..!
HEY! YOU CAN'T MOVE YET!
DON'T BE SO RASH!
AT LEAST USE THIS TIME TO LET YOUR BODY REST A LITTLE
...YOU BETTER STAY PUT!
!?
WHAT HAPPENED ...?
--SEE THIS? IT'S THE PLAN OF THE LABORATORY.
We're at the place that's marked
THE ROUTES LEADING TO EVERY FLOOR ARE LOCKED; THERE'S NO WAY TO GET UP THERE
AND IF WE BREAK THROUGH THE LOCKED GATES, WE WILL ACTIVATE THE DAMAGE ALARM THAT WILL TRIGGER THE EXPLOSION.
SO THAT MEANS... WE'RE LOCKED IN HERE?

KOJO-MARU SAID SO TOO,
"AFTER THE RAIN, THAT WHICH IS HIDDEN WILL AWAKEN"----
THESE WORDS ARE ....?
MAYBE THEY WERE LEFT BY THAT PERSON!
NOT ENTIRELY;
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
BUT I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY HE HASN'T COME TO KILL US YET
THAT PERSON CAN TELL IF WE'RE ALIVE VIA WAVE
IN OTHER WORDS, "IT WILL NOT WAKE UP BEFORE THE RAIN"
DU DU
"THE TEMPO-RARY CALM BEFORE THE AWAKEN-ING"
"THE LAST GATE WILL OPEN WITH THE RAIN"
GOT IT?
--YEAH
IT SEEMS HE'S ALSO UNABLE TO MOVE FREELY
AFTER ALL, ALL THE ROUTES ARE BLOCKED

PUSH
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO IT ...?
--THE LOWER AREA..
BEEP--
BEEP--
BEEP--
IT'S BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY THE EXPLOSION
CLACK
..IS THAT SO...
WEREN'T ALL FLUSHED OUT, BUT WERE INVOLVED IN THE EXPLOSION
I THINK THE NOA...

DON'T WORRY
AIKA AND THE OTHERS WILL BE FINE
THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD SAVE SO MANY PEOPLE
---YEAH. I KNOW THAT
IT CAN'T BE HELPED
WE DID OUR BEST
INSTEAD OF THINKING SO, IT'S MORE LIKE I'M USED TO IT
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO? L BBL INSTEAD OF THINKING SO IT'S MORE LIKE I'M USED TO IT
WHY?
THE EXPRESSION THAT MEANS IT'S BETTER FOR ME TO STAY BY HER SIDE
THE EXPRES-SIONS SHE MAKES THAT MEAN IT'S OKAY,

DON'T UNDER-STAND THAT PERSON AT ALL..
...I...
NOR HIS AC-TIONS ...
NEITHER HIS THOUGHTS
.....
HE PERSON YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT IS--
--- ATSUMA ...
MY BROTH-ER!

THIS ARM HAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT "POWER" THAN HIS...!
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD BETRAY ME,
...BUT THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT ANYMORE
ALL THESE YEARS, HE'S ALWAYS BEEN BY MY SIDE, AS IF IT WAS COMPLETELY NATURAL FOR HIM TO BE THERE...
I'M "ME"
NO MATTER WHAT, I WILL FIGHT UTSUHO 'TILL THE END!

"HIMSELF ...!"
TCH ...!
"ONLY BY OPPOSING THAT PERSON AND CREATING I'AN IMMENSELY STRONG BOND..."
GAR
NOTHING ..
HUH...?
I WAS LOOKING FOR THE LABORATORY'S DATA ON THAT PERSON'S WHEREABOUTS
WHAT'S WRONG?
I FOUND ..

SOME-
THING
INTER-
ESTING
IT SEEMS
LIKE...
IT MUST BE
A VIDEO
RECORD IN
THE NOA
THIS
IS
...!?

WHY IS THIS DATA....
NOA WAS ALWAYS UNDER THE LABORATORY'S CONTROL.
LOOK AT THE MONITOR HERE. TAKE A SEAT.
SO IT'S NOT SURPRISING TO FIND THESE SORT OF RECORDINGS
LOOK, THAT'S YOU ON THE SCREEN
HUH? WHERE?
HERE ...
Ah... THAT'S YOU, RIGHT?
Hahaha...
THE THINGS YOU DID THEN DON'T DIFFER MUCH FROM WHAT YOU DO NOW
Ah, KELLY
...WITH SHORT HAIR...
SO THAT MEANS?
IT'S FROM WHEN I FIRST JOINED NOA?

But...
WATCHING IT,
YOU'VE CHANGED A LOT...
BOTH INSIDE AND OUT...
MAKES YOU FEEL NOSTALGIC, RIGHT--
Ah
IT'S ANZU
AH..
SHE'S STILL THE SAME
Akaha
AS EXPECTED

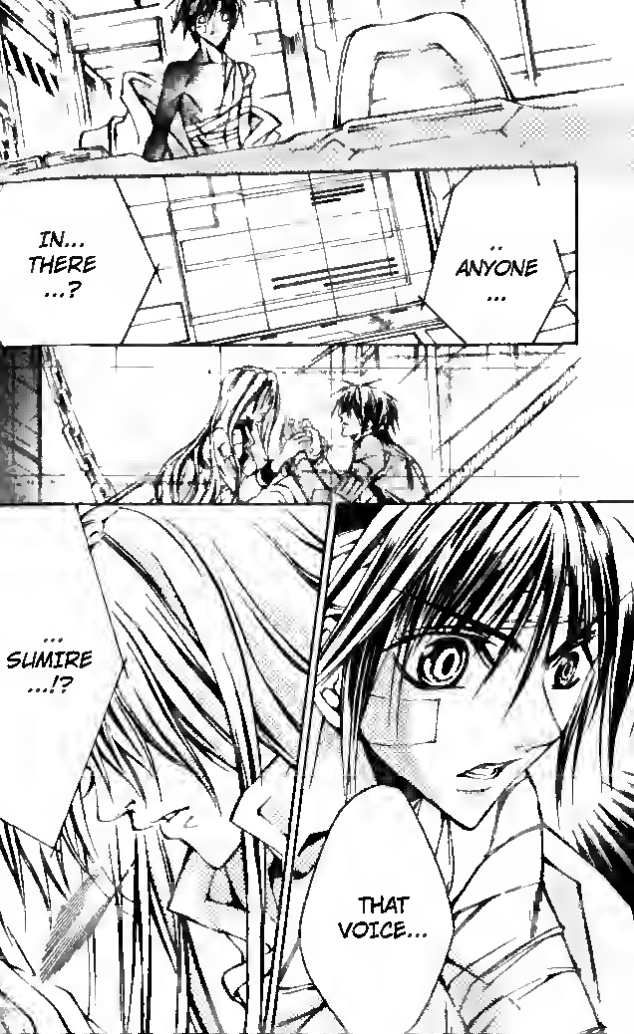
"...IF WE JUST LET HIM DO WHAT HE WANTS..."
"HE WILL CERTAINLY LOSE HIS LIFE"
WHAT'S WRONG?
...NOTHING
WAVE
...YEAH
LISTEN, YOU STILL CAN'T GO OUTSIDE, UNDERSTAND?
You'll attract the guards
Yours are completely worn out
I'LL GO LOOK FOR SOME CLOTHES TO WEAR

"IF YOU STAY BY HIS SIDE."
CLOSE
"WON'T YOU STAND BETWEEN HIM AND HIS "DREAM"?"
SIGH!
...BASTARD!
CLANG
HE'S SUCH A BUSY-BODY!

FUU...
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
HAA...
FUU...
THE COLOR HAS SPREAD--
--MY ARM..
FUU...

..WELL ISN'T THIS NICE...
EVEN IF THIS BODY IS DYED COMPLETELY BLACK,
I WILL...
NEVER LET YOU DO AS YOU PLEASE ....!!

I
--ANY
...
...
THERE
...?


IN... THERE ...?
.. ANYONE ...
... SUMIRE ...!?
THAT VOICE...

...AT... SUMA ...
...IS THAT YOU?
TOUCH!
SUMIRE...

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YOU...
YOU'RE SAFE---
KAMUI CH45

--WHAT DID YOU
SAY ....?
SAY IT AGAIN... ---SUMIRE
I CAN SAY IT OVER AND OVER

THERE'S NOTHING ELSE YOU CAN DO;
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP GOING
---EX-ACTLY
LOOK ON AND DO NOTHING?
YOU'RE TELLING ME TO ...
...OKAY, WELL...
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO NEXT?
WHAT ...?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINK-ING!?
YOU---! STOP JOKING!
SAYING SOME-THING LIKE THAT AT A TIME LIKE THIS...

--NOW, JUST LET US...
NO
DIDN'T YOU AL-READY SAVE ANZU?
YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD
YOU SAID YOU WANT TO KILL THE OKIKURUMI;
IN THE END, IN ORDER FOR KOJOMARU TO PROTECT HIM, HE LEFT MY SIDE AND AWOKE.
I WON'T LET YOU KILL UTSUHO
I SAID IT BEFORE, SUMIRE...
THEN ARE YOU GOING TO BEAR ALL THE WOUNDS YOURSELF?
DOING THIS WILL NOT SATISFY YOUR HEART
HIS MAGIC IS THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF YOUR 'POWER',
IT'S TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO DEFEAT THEM ALONE
...I FELT IT, ATSUMA...
WHAT DID YOU SAY...!?

THE WAVE...!
THE THING THAT CAME WITH YOUR VOICE...
SUMIRE
YOU
STOP YOU....?
-CAN'T I...
WHERE DO YOU PLAN TO GO WITH THAT WEAK BODY?
ARE YOU CRYING --!?

I REALLY AM FINE...
--I'M FINE,
IDIOT
WHY ARE YOU CRYING FOR ME?
BE-CAUSE... IF THIS CONTIN-UES,
YOU'LL SURELY DIE...
I DON'T WANT ...
YOU TO KEEP GETTING HURT---!

ATSUMA...
PLEASE TELL ME,
IS THE POWER OF THE ENGULFING SPIRIT CAUSING THAT?
IF I HAD KNOWN THAT EARLIER, THEN...
I WOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU GO ALONE...
SUMIRE...
DON'T WORRY, SUMIRE ...
I WON'T DIE
MY BODY ISN'T THAT WEAK,
PLUS,
ATSUMA ...
IF I STAY HERE AND DO NOTHING,
I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

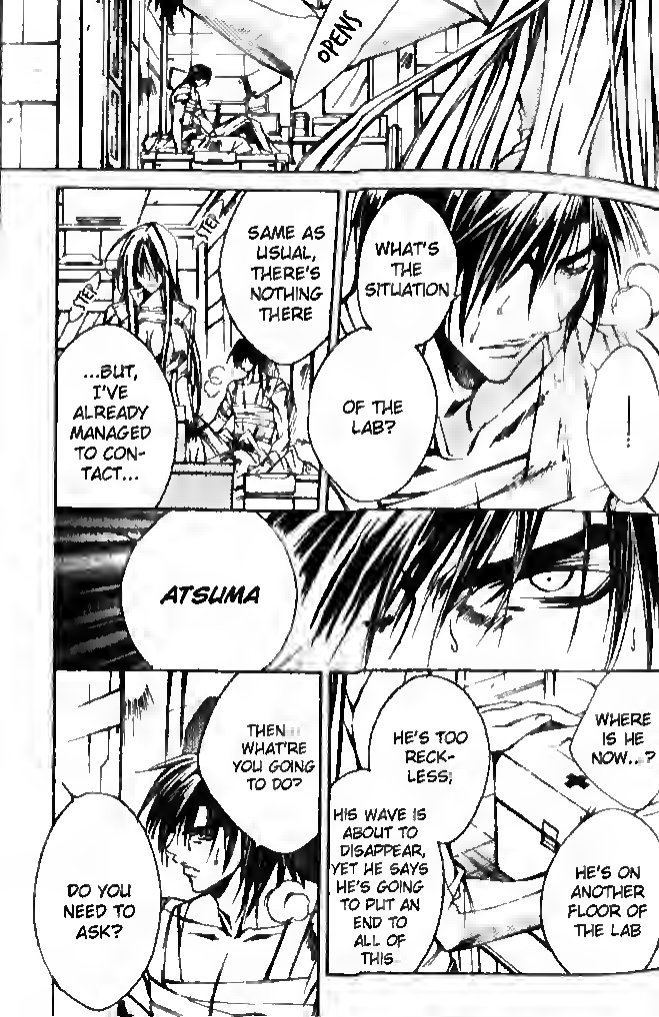
---TO ME, THIS POWER IS NECESSARY
WITHOUT IT, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE IT HERE,
SO .. IT'S FINE LIKE THIS...
THAT'S WHY, EVEN KNOWING WHAT I DO, IF I STAND STILL AND DO NOTHING,
ISN'T IT THE SAME AS 'BEING DEAD' LIKE YOU ALWAYS SAID?
PLUS, I CAN'T LEAVE KOJOMARU BEHIND.
JUST A LITTLE MORE . JUST A LITTLE MORE AND I WILL BE ABLE TO CATCH UP TO UTSUHO;
IS MUCH MORE FRIGHTENING TO ME...
...THAT...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO CRY OVER THIS
...NOT JUST YOU...
SO, SUMIRE ...

NONE OF YOU NEED TO HAVE ANY MORE CONNECTION WITH UTSUHO
ALSO SHIKI...
AND SHUI,
ME, UTSUHO, AND...
KOJO-MARU
I'LL PUT AN END TO ALL OF THIS
MY ICY COLD HAND CAN FEEL--- YOUR WARMTH
I CAN FEEL IT, SUMIRE ...
... ATSUMA ...

UNCONSCIOUSLY,
YOUR HAND IS ALREADY HOLDING MINE...
AFTERWARD, IT'LL DEFINITELY BE LIKE THIS----
THAT'S WHY I CAN...
CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD

LET ME GO,
SUMIRE ...
NO MATTER WHERE, YOUR WARMTH WILL HELP ME MOVE FORWARD
ISN'T THAT SO?
ATSUMA!
---DON'T WORRY
WAIT ...!
AIKA ALREADY LEFT THE LAB
YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING.
SUMIRE ...

IT'S GREAT TO BE ABLE TO HEAR YOUR VOICE
BEEP!
ATS--!


OPENS
SAME AS USUAL, THERE'S NOTHING THERE
WHAT'S THE SITUATION
...BUT, I'VE ALREADY MANAGED TO CONTACT...
OF THE LAB?
!
ATSUMA
THEN... WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
HE'S TOO RECKLESS;
WHERE IS HE NOW...?
HIS WAVE IS ABOUT TO DISAPPEAR, YET HE SAYS HE'S GOING TO PUT AN END TO ALL OF THIS
HE'S ON ANOTHER FLOOR OF THE LAB
DO YOU NEED TO ASK?

I WANT TO GO
I STILL HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE;
"DREAMS" ...
CAN NEVER BE ABAN-DONED--

SOMEONE MUST BE SACRIFICED
CLACK
LET ME...
FOLLOW YOU, ATSUMA

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF DANGERS I'LL FACE
--I CAN'T GUARAN-TEE YOUR SAFETY
I KNOW
UM...
SHUI...
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE
AFTER LISTENING TO YANAGI,
THEN WHY DO YOU STILL...
WHETHER IT'S "THE PROMISE I MADE WITH YOU" OR "BECOMING YOUR BURDEN,"
I STILL CAN'T ...
...BUT, NO MATTER HOW I THINK ABOUT IT, I STILL CAN'T DO NOTHING
IT'S TRUE THAT I CAN'T DO MUCH,
AND I MIGHT BE A BURDEN IF I FOLLOW YOU

CAST YOU ASIDE AGAIN
DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO ME BEFORE?
"IF YOU..."
"IF YOU... --------- THAT'LL BE GREAT"
"HUH ..?"
"ARE REALLY MY BIG BROTHER, IT'LL BE GREAT"
.....?
OF COURSE I'M NO MATCH FOR THE REAL THING
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND...
BUT, ATSUMA ...

ALL THIS TIME, I'VE BEEN
THINKING OF YOU AS MY REAL LITTLE BROTHER!
I BELIEVE IN YOU MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE
IF YOU SAY YOU WON'T DIE, THEN I BELIEVE YOU WON'T.
THAT'S WHY I'LL STAY WITH YOU TO THE END
Hey
WHAT'S WITH THAT FACE?
THERE'S NO BIG BROTHER WHO DOESN'T WISH TO SEE HIS LITTLE BROTHER HAPPY.
YOU COULDN'T FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR EVEN IF YOU TURNED ON THE LIGHT, YOU KNOW?

THAT'S RIGHT...
YOU'RE AN IDIOT
YOU DEFI-NITELY WON'T DIE EITHER,
SHUI

I SWEAR--
---THE THINGS I NEED,

ARE ALREADY IN MY HEART
I CAN'T TURN BACK...
PNP
PNP
I CAN ONLY HOLD MY BREATH AND WALK TO THE END
THE THINGS I NEED TO CARRY...
COME---

MY BODY IS ENOUGH---
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
...THE SMELL OF...
RAIN
!!!

...
DON'T CRY, KOJOMARU
....
I'LL GO THERE AS SOON AS I CAN....
I WON'T ...
LET ANYONE CRY ANYMORE!!

CAN YOU FEEL IT, KOJOMARU ...?
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE'S DEFEATED, THERE'LL STILL BE SOMEONE TO POUR VITALITY INTO HIS BODY
THIS CHILD HAS THE ABILITY TO GAIN POWER FROM OTHERS.
HIS WAVE... IS ALREADY SO WEAK,
YET HE STILL HAS SO MUCH LIFE

EVEN IF...
YOU'RE NOT BY HIS SIDE---
AND SEE FOR YOUR-SELF---
YOU CAN JUST STAY THERE ...

THE THING WE SEEK...
THE FINAL ROAD---

FALLEN INTO DARKNESS---
THE WORLD ..
ONCE MY LIGHTLESS EYES WERE SHUT,
BEFORE MY EYES, THERE'S ONLY THE NEVER-ENDING DARKNESS
APPEARED BEFORE ME---
THAT WHITE SPOT,
ISN'T 'YOU'
THE THING I NEED...

...AND YOU ARE..
THE SAME AS ME... KOJO-MARU
EVEN IF WE ACQUIRE THE PER-FECT POWER,
WE STILL CAN NEVER ACCOMPLISH OUR TRUE DREAM, AND WE CAN NEVER BE RE-DEEMED---
THE MOMENT THAT CHILD WAS BORN...
EVERY-THING WAS FATED
THAT'S WHY I THROW AWAY...
--FOR THAT...
THOSE SO-CALLED BLOOD TIES--

COME HERE, ATSUMA!
--COME
IT'S TIME...
TO END THIS---

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A kiss on
the chest
chapter.46

--THIS PLACE IS ALSO...
WHAT'S HAPPENED?
THIS WAY, AT LEAST WE'RE ABLE TO MOVE FREELY AROUND THE TOWER.
BUT REGARDLESS IF THEY'RE GUARDS OR RESEARCHERS, THEY'VE ALL BEEN KILLED...
...AND,
TO LET IT CONTINUE LIKE THAT IS...
...
UH
...

IT'S KOJOMARU ---!
CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL IT...
I CAN ONLY FEEL THE SUPPRESSION OF ANGER AND GRIEF...
I...
BUT THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO BE COMING FROM KOJOMARU
BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT WHAT KOJOMARU SAID, THAT UTSUHO "CANNOT BE KILLED."
I DON'T KNOW WHY...
ATSUMA ...
EVEN SO, WE SHOULD MOVE AS QUICKLY AS POS-SIBLE---

AND YOU CAN STILL KEEP MOVING AHEAD SO EASILY.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS ROUTE...
---SO, WHAT HAPPENS NOW? YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HE IS.
IT'S BECAUSE I FEEL IT...
HE'S CALLING OUT TO ME---
---IT'S LIKE BACK THEN...
...HMM.
THIS IS THE SECOND TIME NOW, THAT I CAN FEEL IT DEEP IN MY HEART...
...HEY, ATSUMA ...
JUST WAIT UNTIL EVERY-THING IS OVER...

I PLAN TO---
SOMEONE'S HERE...
EH?
...ATSUMA?
!!?
swish...

IT SEEMS LIKE YOU ALWAYS GET THERE FIRST!
WHAT THE...
OF COURSE, SHIKI IS WOUNDED
NO MATTER HOW I THINK ABOUT IT, IT DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE ---

KOJO-MARU --!
YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE LATE.
YOU FINALLY CAME, ATSUMA.
I ORIGINALLY WANTED TO SAVE THE WORST FOR LAST SO I COULD PLAY WITHOUT BEING INTERRUPTED.
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE "GROWN" SO QUICKLY.
WHAT I MEAN IS THE GAME IS NEARING ITS END.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ...
--LOOK!
UTSUHO --!!

HMM...
THAT'S ...!?

THAT'S...
OKIKURUMI'S REAL FACE!?
---BUT...IT LOOKS SO DIFFERENT!
IT WILL BRING RAIN WHEN IT WAKES.
NOW THAT IT HAS FOOD,
OKIKURUMI CAN FINALLY ENTER THE LAST PHASE OF AWARENESS.
OKIKURUMI...!!?

YOU CAN'T STOP IT, EVEN WITH YOUR POWER.
THE ENDLESS RAIN WILL CONSUME THE ENTIRE CITY,
AND EVERYTHING WILL BE CLEANSED.
IT'S JUST LIKE THE SPREADING OF A NURSERY RHYME, I WILL LET THIS WORLD SINK THROUGH WHAT I'VE DONE.
AFTER TEN YEARS,
I CAN FINALLY GET MY WISH THROUGH THE POWER OF THE MIRACLE.

LET YOU DO THAT...!
I WON'T ...
THIS WORLD AND US...
WE DON'T EXIST JUST FOR YOUR WISHES.
---WE ARE HERE TO STOP YOU.
UTSUHO.
I FINALLY UNDER-STAND YOUR MOTIVES.
SO THIS TIME, I HAVE TO STOP YOU...!

TEN YEARS AGO,
YOU COULD NOT STOP ME FROM LEAVING THE VILLAGE,
IN WHAT WAY DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?
NOW, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO STOP ME?
IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF YOUR POWER THAT YOU CAN COME HERE.
YOU'RE WRONG, ATSUMA!
UNDERSTAND ...
ME ....?

EVERYTHING IS UNDER MY CONTROL, ENABLING ME TO MAKE MY MOVE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER IT'S THIS WORLD, OR YOU...
IT'S BECAUSE ALL OF MY PAWNS HAVE DONE WHAT I TOLD THEM. THEY HAVE SINCE RETURNED TO MY SIDE.
KOJO-MARU...
THIS...
OBVIOUSLY, HE IS TOO.
THESE THINGS ...
THEY WON'T WORK THAT QUICKLY, WILL THEY?

YOU HAVE TO TRY IT TO FIND OUT, RIGHT?
THESE BRATS GIVE ME A HEADACHE ...
HMM... --REALLY ...
THOSE CRUEL THINGS IN MY HEART TO BE SWEPT AWAY---
SO THIS WILL ALLOW
BUT LIKE YOU,
I WILL CERTAINLY NOT BACK DOWN.
GO AHEAD AND STRUGGLE ALL YOU LIKE!
...DO AS YOU PLEASE;

WHATEVER WE'RE UP AGAINST, I WILL ALWAYS GET WHAT'S IMPORTANT
MY WISH ----!
--HAVE THEY...
ARRIVED THERE SAFELY?
rain

YOU KNOW HE WILL FOLLOW.
IS THAT WHY YOU SAID THAT TO HIM?
---THOSE TWO..
... IS ALL I CAN DO.
...IT'S BECAUSE THAT MUCH...
-----YOU SAID, WHAT WAS THAT FOR? HYDE-SAMA ...
... SHUI MUST HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT!
ATSUMI... YOU CAN TAKE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A LOT OF THINGS ...
BUT YOU CANNOT LEAVE HIM BY HIMSELF.

I ONLY WANTED THAT PERSON TO SEE ATSUMA.
BUT WHY DO I STILL WANT TO HELP THAT HIM?
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE ME THIS HOPE-LESS
CAN YOU PLEASE ..
STAY WITH ME A BIT LONGER, HYDE?
YANAGI ...
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY A LITTLE BIT,
I STILL WANT TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF REDEMP-TION THAT PERSON COULD RECEIVE---

SHUI
...!!
ALL THAT HE WISHED FOR

YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO SAY,
BUT WON'T THE RESULT BE THE SAME EITHER WAY?
HA...
ARE YOU OKAY?
AH...!
.....!!!
ALL YOU DO IS GIVE ME MORE PROBLEMS, SHUI TACHIBANA!
---EVEN SO,
AA...
...BONES... BREAK...

DO YOU NOT REALIZE THAT YOU ARE JUST AN ANNOYING BRAT HERE?
WITH THAT LEVEL OF SORCERY, YOU COME HERE AND TRY TO FIGHT ME.
I'VE GIVEN YOU A CHANCE TO LIVE. WHY DO YOU STILL COME TO ME?
ALWAYS SAYS THE SAME THINGS. HOW ANNOYING.
...EVERY-ONE...
THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST UNLEASH OKIKU-RUMI.
IF THAT'S TRUE,
SHUI ...

YOU'RE SO SELFISH, MAKING YOUR CUTE LITTLE BROTHER SUFFER LIKE THIS;
TEACH YOU A LESSON... PROFESSOR HASUMI
I CAME HERE TO.
MY REASON FOR COMING HERE IS SIMPLE
YOU REALLY SHOULD REFLECT ON YOUR ACTIONS--!!!

SHUI!

KO-
JO-
MA-
RU
..!
DIDN'T I TELL YOU, ATSUMA ...?
EVERYTHING IS LIKE THIS BECAUSE OF ME...

HAHAH
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT DID YOU DO TO KOJOMARU ...?
SO, WHY IS IT STILL TRYING TO PROTECT THE PERSON WHO WANTS TO KILL OKIKURUMI?
THAT'S HOW KOJOMARU IS.
KOJOMARU IS THE SWORD THAT WILL PROTECT OKIKURUMI.
TELL YOU SOMETHING, ATSUMA ..
LET ME...
WHAT'S HIDDEN ON YOUR CHEST---
.....!?
AT LEAST, TO KOJOMARU.
I'VE DONE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

BUT YOU DIDN'T COME JUST FOR THAT ANSWER, DID YOU?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ...?
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW, FIND THE ANSWER YOURSELF!
... BUT ...
AND YOU EVEN BROUGHT SUCH AN UNNECESSARY ITEM WITH YOU. I'M AFRAID THAT A NAIVE CHILD LIKE YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING AT ALL!
AHH!!!
DON'T...

TOUCH
HIM
...!!

YOU...!
...KOJO-MARU...
AH
ATSUMA ...!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, IN THE END...!
WHY...
BACK THEN, IT WAS YOU WHO BROUGHT ME OUT OF THE VILLAGE PRISON TO COME HERE
IS YOUR EXPRESSION THE SAME AS MINE WAS THEN!?

YOU CAME TO ME FOR HELP THEN, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S WHY
YOU STILL HAVE SOMETHING YOU WISH FOR, RIGHT!?
!!
---IN THAT VILLAGE,
ONLY I COULD HEAR YOUR VOICE...,

IT COULDN'T BE THAT
IT'S JUST SO WE COULD COMMIT FRATRICIDE?

THAT WAS-=?
KOJOMARU, TELL ME THE TRUTH!
COUGH
WHAT'S TAKEN AWAY YOUR FREEDOM!?
WHAT IS TORMENTING YOU!?

PLEASE, TELL ME, KOJO-MARU ...

KOJO-
MA-
RU--
!!

IT'S NO USE.
SUMIRE ...!!?
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY TO HIM, IT WON'T GET THROUGH.

WHY DID THE SPIRIT THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT OKIKURUMI END UP PROTECTING HIM...
SHIKI ...!
I FINALLY KNOW WHAT IT WAS I SAW ON HIS CHEST LAST TIME...
SURELY THIS GUY IS THE ONE TO BLAME...!

THE PATTERN!?
THE REASON IS WRITTEN ON HIS CHEST...
IT'S THE MEANING OF THE PATTERN...
IT'S JUST LIKE...
THE ONE THAT APPEARED ON YOUR THROAT, AND IT MEANS THE SAME THING--
THE PATTERN ON HIS CHEST...
THIS GUY...
UTSUHO HASUMI,

HAS ALREADY MADE A CONTRACT WITH OKIKURUMI ---!!!